F-8109

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	:	Andreas HOFFER, et al.
Serial No.	:	10/753,716
Filed	:	January 8, 2004
For	:	ROTARY SLIDE VALVE FOR SERVO-ASSISTED STEERING SYSTEMS

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Frank J. Jordan — **03/18/04**
(Name) **(Signature and Date)**

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Sir:

Attached hereto is a copy of the Provisional International Office Action-Supplement for International File No. PCT/EP02/10164. Also enclosed is an English translation thereof. The Japanese reference JP-A-11208491 was listed on applicant's previously filed form PTO-1449.

Respectfully submitted,
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V. Justified determination according to Article 35(2) with respect to the novelty, the inventive activity and the commercial applicability; documents and explanations in support of this determination

Independent Claim 1

(Document D1) JP-A-11208491, according to the distinguishing features of the introductory portion of claim 1, shows a rotary slide valve for the power steering of motor vehicles with an inlet element and an outlet element with limited capability to rotate, coupled to the latter over a torsion-bar spring (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: The German text seems to be either incomplete or garbled here!) to one of the same, non-rotationally, are provided with a rotary slide and a control bushing, which, lying coaxially to one another, are provided with overflow openings, which vary their degree of overlapping as a function of the angle of rotation between the rotary slide and the control bushing, and of which the control bushing has a radially outward overlapping axial region to the outlet element, which carries a radial coupling pin, which, moved into a seat of the control bushing, is held in this under the tension of a spring, the seat, starting out from an inlet cross section with oversize, tapers to the coupling pin to a cross section, which is smaller than the cross section of the coupling pin, and that the coupling pin is braced to a clearance-free position in the tapered cross-sectional region of the seat.

The object of claim 1 differs from the above owing to the fact that the coupling pin is braced axially by a split washer, which extends in the circumferential direction of the control bushing and to which a clamping incline is assigned.

This new distinguishing feature of the present invention accomplishes the objective of providing a reliable, simple spring tensioning device, which can be installed easily for

appropriately imposing a load on the coupling pin in the direction of its clearance-free installed position.

The use of a split washer, so disposed, for accomplishing this object of the invention, was not known previously, so that this is an inventive measure.

Accordingly, the object of claim 1 is based on inventive activity (Article 33 (3) of the PCT).

Claims 2 to 11, which depend on Claim 1

The dependent claims 2 to 11, the object of which is to develop the invention of claim 1 further, also meet the requirements of the PCT.

Industrial Applicability

The object of claim 1 also fulfills the requirements of Article 33 (4) of the PCT, since it can be used at least in the field of motor vehicle engineering.